

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-01 SP-02 L-01

INR-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PRS-01 SY-02 SCCT-01 IO-03

DHA-02 /044 W

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R 142228Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4382

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 5598

LIMDIS

EO 11652: XGDS4

TAGS: SHUM, CI

SUBJECT: "DISAPPEARED" CHILEAN EXTREMISTS: LUIS ALBERTO GUENDELMAN
WISNIAK

REF: STATE 191086

1. SUMMARY: LAST SENTENCE REFTEL RAISED QUESTION RELATING
TO FURTHER PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE ON GUENDELMAN AND WHAT SATIS-
FACTION EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED IN FOLLOWING UP ISSUE WITH FON
MINISTRY. ISSUE HAS NOT REPEAT NOT BEEN RAISED AGAIN WITH
FONMIN AND EMBASSY DOES NOT REPEAT NOT BELIEVE IT USEFUL OR
PRACTICAL TO DO SO. END SUMMARY.

2. TO RECAPITULATE EMBASSY CONTACTS WITH GOC ON GUENDELMAN
CASE:

A) IN RESPONSE TO INDICATIONS OF US INTEREST IN CASE, EMBASSY
OCTOBER 17, 1974, ASKED FONMINISTRY VIA INFORMAL CHANNEL FOR
REPORT ON DETENTION. MINISTRY REPLIED OCTOBER 25, 1974, THAT
"COMPETENT AUTHORITIES" (I.E., INTERIOR MINISTRY) HAD NO
INFORMATION INDICATING THAT GUENDELMAN WAS DETAINED.

B) SOMEWHAT SKEPTICAL OF FONMIN INFORMATION, EMBOFF DURING
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CALL IN NOVEMBER ON ANOTHER SUBJECT CHECKED WITH RESPONSIBLE

GOC OFFICIAL WITH ACCESS TO SUCH INFORMATION. REPLY (CHECKED BY TELEPHONE IN EMBOFF'S PRESENCE) WAS THAT GUENDELMAN WAS DETAINED AND IN GOOD HEALTH (SANTIAGO 6860, NOVEMBER 1974). EMBASSY HAS NOT USED SOURCE AGAIN IN SUCH CASES AND CANNOT REVEAL HIS IDENTITY TO INTERESTED PERSONS. IF HE WERE ASKED ABOUT HIS NOVEMBER STATEMENT, HE COULD BE EXPECTED TO SAY THAT EMBOFF HAD MISUNDERSTOOD HIM, OR DENY MAKING STATEMENT.

C) IN RESPONSE TO FURTHER INDICATIONS OF US INTEREST, EMBASSY FEBRUARY 6, 1975, REPEATED ITS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION THROUGH INFORMAL CHANNEL, STATING IT HAD BEEN LEARNED GUENDELMAN WAS DETAINED. FAMILY/FRIENDS IN U.S. SUBSEQUENTLY CONTINUED CAMPAIGN AND INFORMED VARIOUS PERSONS THAT GUENDELMAN HAD BEEN SEEN IN DETENTION CAMP IN NOVEMBER; FURTHER THAT HE HAD BEEN HOSPITALIZED IN DECEMBER 1974 AS RESULT OF TORTURE, AND FROM HOSPITAL SENT TO UNKNOWN PRISON. EMBASSY SENT THIRD INFORMAL QUERY ON APRIL 15, 1975.

D) SHORTLY AFTERWARD, FONMINISTRY OFFICIAL, SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF FONMINISTER'S CHEF DE CABINET, ASKED US TO IDENTIFY SOURCE OF OUR REPORT TO WASHINGTON AND OF STATEMENT IN OUR FEB 6 INFORMAL NOTE, THAT GUENDELMAN WAS DETAINED (B AND C ABOVE) SO THAT MINISTRY MIGHT INTERVIEW HIM. HE EXPLAINED THAT MINISTRY'S REPEATED EFFORTS TO TRACE GUENDELMAN THROUGH GOC SECURITY AGENCIES HAD CONSISTENTLY PRODUCED FLAT DENIALS OF ANY KNOWLEDGE OF HIM. YET AMB. TRUCCO, RESPONDING TO U.S. CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE, WAS DEMANDING THAT MINISTRY RESOLVE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN INFORMATION ON GUENDELMAN'S DETENTION, INCLUDED IN DEPARTMENT'S REPLIES TO CONGRESSIONAL QUERIES, AND MINISTRY'S INABILITY TO FIND ANY TRACE OF GUENDELMAN. ALTHOUGH SYMPATHETIC TO FONMINISTRY'S DILEMMA, WE DID NOT IDENTIFY OUR SOURCE.

E) IN CONNECTION WITH JUNE 1975 QUERY FROM DEA/BUENOS AIRES ON GUENDELMAN IN NARCOTICS INVESTIGATION, (SANTIAGO 4925), EMBOFF RECEIVED INCIATION FROM SOURCE WITH ACCESS TO SUCH INFORMATION THAT GUENDELMAN WAS DEAD. EMBASSY DID NOT REPORT THIS INFORMATION AT THE TIME, SINCE RELIABILITY OF SOURCE WAS NOT KNOWN, AND IT WAS CONSIDERED IRRESPONSIBLE TO PUT FAMILY IN SUSPENSE ON BASIS OF SUCH QUESTIONABLE INFORMATION, CONFIDENTIAL

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SOURCE OF WHICH COULD NOT BE DISCLOSED.

F) ON JULY 16, 1975, FONMINISTRY INFORMED US ORALLY THAT GUENDELMAN BODY HAD BEEN FOUND IN ARGENTINA (SANTIAGO 4990). ORAL REPORT WAS FOLLOWED UP BY TESTY, FORMAL NOTE DATED JULY 18 (SANTIAGO 5180). EMBASSY HAS IMPRESSION THAT FONMINISTRY, ACTING IN GOOD FAITH, THOUGHT IT HAD CAUGHT US IN IRRESPONSIBLE ACTION AND THAT OTHER GOC AUTHORITIES HAD BEEN

RIGHT ALL ALONG WHEN THEY SAID GUENDELMAN HAD NOT BEEN
DETAINED.

3. LATEST INFORMATION FROM FONMINISTRY OVERLAPPED WITH
FURTHER DISCLOSURES ON MISSING 119 EXTREMISTS, AND INDICATIONS
THAT GUENDELMAN'S PURPORTED BODY WAS NOT HIS (SANTIAGO 5085).
FONMINISTRY OFFICER WHO ACTS AS OUR INFORMAL CHANNEL HAS
SINCE INDICATED HSI UNEASE OVER MINISTRY'S POSITION IN
LIGHT OF LATER INFORMATION.

4. WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO FOLLOW UP MATTER WITH
FONMINISTRY FORMALLY: WE CANNOT REVEAL SOURCE OF ORIGINAL
INFORMATION THAT GUENDELMAN HAD BEEN DETAINED, OR INFORMATION
THAT GUENDELMAN HAD BEEN DETAINED, OR INFORMATION DERIVED
FROM ANOTHER GOC SURCE THAT HE IS DEAD. AFTER HAVING EARLIER
REFUSED TO COOPERATE WITH FONMINISTRY IN EFFORT TO CLARIFY
MATTER, WE HAVE LITTLE BASIS TO CHALLENGE IT NOW, UNLESS
WE ARE PREPARED TO REVEAL OUR SOURCES. EMBASSY COULD ASK
FONMINISTRY INFORMALLY FOR ANY COMMENT ON DISCREPANCY BETWEEN
ITS NOTE OF JULY 18, 1975, AND VARIOUS PRESS REPORTS THAT
BODY IN ARGENTINA IS NOT THAT OF GUENDELMAN. CONSIDERING
HISTORY OF CASE, HOWEVER, WE DOUBT MINISTRY WOULD BE HELPFUL.

5. IN FURTHER PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE, SUGGEST DEPARTMENT
MAY WISH TO STATE WE ARE UNABLE TO RECONCILE OR ASSESS
CONFLICTING REPORTS OF GUENDELMAN FATE RECEIVED OVER RECENT
MONTHS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WELFARE & WHEREABOUTS, REPORTS, MISSING PERSONS, DEATHS, EXTREMISTS, ALLEGATIONS, INVESTIGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SANTIA05598
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X4
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750282-1080
From: SANTIAGO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750852/aaaabtgtel
Line Count: 143
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 75 STATE 191086
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 SEP 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <19 NOV 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: "DISAPPEARED" CHILEAN EXTREMISTS: LUIS ALBERTO GUENDELMAN WISNIAK
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, CI, (GUENDELMAN WISNIAK, ALBERTO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006